

# THE COMPANION.

No. XXVII. WEDNESDAY, JULY 9, 1828.

---

"Something alone yet not alone, to be wished, and only to be found, in a friend."—SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE.

---

## SPECIMENS OF BRITISH POETESSES.

(Concluded from p. 384.)

IN our last number, we omitted a panegyric on *Marriage*, which we had intended to notice. It was written by Mrs Cowley, the dramatist, authoress of the *Belle's Stratagem*. Mr Dyce reports of her, that "she had very little pleasure in theatrical representations." It is to be hoped that she was too happy at home. The origin of her taste for dramatic writing is thus related by the biographers. "While sitting at one of the theatres with her husband, she told him that she thought she could write quite as good a comedy as the one that was then performing, and on his laughing at her, the next morning sketched the first act of the 'Runaway,' which met with so much success, that she was encouraged to proceed, and next produced 'The Belle's Stratagem,' which established her fame completely, and was soon ranked among the best stock pieces."\*

Mrs Cowley's poem, above-mentioned, is as follows:—

"O Marriage! pow'rful charm, gift all divine,  
Sent from the skies, o'er life's drear waste to shine;  
What splendours from thy bright tiara spring,  
What graces round thy chasten'd footsteps cling!

\* Gorton's General Biographical Dictionary.

Vengeance will surely crush the ideot land,  
That drags the sceptre from thy hallow'd hand;  
That dares to trample on thy holy rites,  
And nuptial perfidy, unaw'd, invites."

Let us pause here. The "ideot land" was "France during the Revolution." But vengeance did not crush it. On the contrary, France was notoriously bettered by the Revolution; and is at this minute one of the freest and happiest countries in the world. On the other hand, "nuptial *perfidy*" was never in such flourishing condition as under the old system. The difference in that respect was that, under the old system, marriage was at once *indissoluble and despised*; whereas, under the new, it was made dissoluble, because philosophy had taught the union of the sexes to be more respected.

"The weeping world to thee its solace owes,  
From thee derives its truest, best repose;  
Not the cold compact subtle interest twines,  
Not that which pale Submission trembling signs,  
Is *Marriage*! No! 'tis when its polish'd chain  
Binds those who in each other's bosom reign;  
'Tis when two minds form one ecstatic whole,  
One sweetly blended wish, one sense, one soul."

Very pretty: and this, we dare say, was Mrs Cowley's marriage when she wrote. Perhaps it lasted during her life. Her husband was a Captain in the East India service: his visits may have been "few and far between;" and as Mrs Cowley was amiable and sensible, she may have justly preferred the raptures of those renewals of their intercourse, with hope, and honour, and sweet thoughts in the interval, to those grosser and dull demands of habit, neither necessary nor flattering, which are the weakest and most ridiculous of all debaucheries, and waste away life in a bluster of insipidity.

But if such marriages as Mrs Cowley here describes are the only ones, what are we to call the rest? And how does she differ in her notion of marriage, or the spirit of it, from those who were ideots and to be punished? France never meant to say, that two persons who were suited to each other, might not remain so all their life. It was old France that laughed at such a notion. New France said, love one another as long as you please, but if you find that the mistakes of youth, or any other cause, have brought to-

gether two unsuitable persons, and that you are really and lastingly so, what good can it be to you or to society to continue miserable yourselves, and propagating dulness, error, and bye-words on marriage and human misery to all eternity? France said this, and twenty other things which the common sense of mankind had long been feeling; and the consequence was, that she rose again from the ashes of old customs, *double* the thing she was, in "mind, body, and estate."

According to Mrs Cowley, not above one pair in a thousand are married, and even that is a romantic calculation. May the rest then consider themselves as unmarried, and act accordingly? If not, what does her denouncement, or her panegyric, amount to?

"This was the gift the exil'd seraph curst,  
When from hell's blazing continent he burst;  
Eden's full charms he saw, without a groan,  
Tho' Nature there had fixed her gorgeous throne;  
Its rich ananas, and its aloes high,  
Whose forms pyramidal approached the sky,  
Its towering palms with luscious clusters crown'd,  
Its shrubs, whose perfumes fill'd the regions round;  
Its streams pellucid, and its bowers of shade,  
Its flowers, that knew to bloom, but not to fade;  
Its orb, that gave the new created day,  
Night's lunar bow, that soothed with tender ray,  
Its fields of wavy gold, its slopes of green,  
By the fell fiend without a pang were seen—  
'Twas then fierce rancour seized the demon's breast,  
When in the *married pair* he felt mankind were blest!"

Good:—but suppose he had seen, not merely this first married pair in all the beauty of their youth, newness, and innocence, with no wish to be unfaithful, and nobody to be unfaithful with if they had it, but all the married pairs that were to issue from that union? What would he have said then? What *did* he say, according to Machiavel? Or, if this authority be suspected, what did *Milton* say on these two very points? There is a beautiful passage, the famous one beginning, "Hail, wedded love," which is often quoted from *Paradise Lost*, and adduced as shewing the author's opinion of marriage. It is an opinion however, like Mrs Cowley's, that supposes an *if*; nor can a proper conclusion be got at respecting the sentiments of the writer, without comparing it with his *Treatise on Divorce*, his own conduct, and a subsequent passage in the same



poem; which passage, as it is very remarkable, and always kept in the back-ground when the other is quoted, we shall here repeat. It is further remarkable, that the panegyric on Wedded Love is an imitation from Tasso, who was never married; while the subsequent account of wedlock is entirely Milton's, and evidently made up of all that he had felt and observed.

" . . . . . O! what are these,  
 Death's ministers, not men? who thus deal death  
 Inhumanly to men, and multiply  
 Ten thousandfold the sin of him who slew  
 His brother: for of whom such massacre  
 Make they, but of their brethren; men of men?  
 . . . . . These are the product  
 Of those ill-mated marriages thou sawest;  
 Where good with bad were matched, who of themselves  
 Abhor to join; and by imprudence mix'd  
 Produce prodigious births of body or of mind."

*Paradise Lost, Book Eleventh.*

Mrs Hunter, "wife of the celebrated John Hunter, and sister of the present Sir Everard Home, published a volume of Poems, some of which are written with much elegance and feeling. Several of her songs had previously been set to music: one or two are embalmed in the eternal melodies of Haydn."—Among the latter, is a song extracted by Mr Dyce, beginning

"The season comes when first we met."

It is the first composition of Haydn that convinced us he could write with genuine passion, and stopped the mouth of divers blasphemies we used to utter on that point. It is to be found in an elegant selection of airs, trios, &c., in two volumes, well worthy the attention, and not beyond the skill, of the amateur, published by Mr Sainsbury, and entitled the *Vocal Anthology*. Mrs Hunter was author of the well-known Death Song of a Cherokee Indian,

"The sun sets in night, and the stars shun the day."

A simple and cordial energy, made up of feeling and good sense, is the characteristic of the better part of her writings.

"Hester Lynch Piozzi, more distinguished," says Mr Dyce, "as the friend and hostess of Johnson, than as an authoress, was the daughter of John Salsbury, Esq. of Bodvel in Caernarvonshire: her first husband was Mr Thrale, an eminent brewer; her second,

Signor Piozzi, a music-master. The superiority of *The Three Warnings* to her other poetical pieces, has excited suspicion that Johnson assisted her in its composition."

There is no foundation for these suspicions. The style is a great deal too natural and lively for Johnson. If we suspected anything, it would be that Mrs Thrale had found the original in the French, the lax metre and versification resembling those of the second order of French tales in verse. Mrs Thrale was one who would naturally give rise to suspicion, for she was a lax talker, careless of truth. As to the objections against her for marrying Piozzi, we never could enter into them. "An eminent brewer" is a very good thing; but how it is to be considered *per se*, as superior to a music-master, we cannot conceive. On the contrary, the music-master, in himself, must be considered as having the advantage, for he at least has an accomplishment, whereas the other may know nothing but how to brew. The greatest composers have been music-masters: Haydn was one, Mozart was one, Sacchini, Gluck, Winter, Paesello,—perhaps indeed every name famous in the art. Mr Thrale, it is true, besides being a brewer, was an agreeable host and a scholar, able to converse with Dr Johnson, and to spend his money handsomely; though all this (to judge from appearances) did not hinder him from killing himself with eating and drinking; but nothing, we believe, is known against Piozzi, except the wish of his enemies to find fault with him, which was probably owing to envy. A man whom we conversed with the other day at Streatham, had nothing to say in his disfavour, though he seemed to partake of the common opinion against the marriage. Piozzi, according to him, appears to have spent his money as handsomely as Thrale, and he seemed to consider him a respectable man. The last we heard of Mrs Thrale was a little before her death, when she sat for her portrait to an eminent artist, and appeared to be as lively as ever. She must have been then near eighty. The artist happened to have in his room an excellent copy which he had made of Johnson's portrait by Sir Joshua. She recognized it, and cried out, "Ah, my dear Doctor Johnson!" Here was at least no grudge on the score of old quarrels.

Mrs Radcliffe's verses are unworthy of her romances. In the

latter she was what Mr Mathias called her, "a mighty magician;"—or not to lose the fine sound of his whole phrase,—"the mighty magician of Udolpho." In her verses, she is a tinselled nymph in a pantomime, calling up common-places with a feeble wand.

Anna Lætitia Barbauld is perhaps the chief poetess in the book. At any rate, she is one of the three best. The others are Anne Countess of Winchelsea, already noticed; and Lady Anne Barnard, of whom more presently. It is curious, by the way, to observe how the name of Anne predominates in this list of females. There are seventy-eight writers in all, besides anonymous ones, and two or three whose Christian names are not known; and out of these seventy-eight, eighteen have the name of Anne. The name that prevails next, is Mary; and then Elizabeth. The popularity of Anne is perhaps of Protestant origin, and began with Anne Boleyn. It served at once to proclaim the new opinions, to eschew the reigning Catholic appellation of Mary, and at the same time to appear modestly scriptural. But the sweet gentleness of the name of Mary was not to be put down, even by the help of the poor bigot of Smithfield.

Mr Dyce informs us that Mr Fox used to speak with admiration of Mrs Barbauld's talents, and had got her songs by heart. This was an applause worth having. We must extract the whole of her *Summer Evening's Meditation*, if it is only for the sake of some noble lines in it, and to present to the reader's imagination the picture of a fine-minded female wrapt up in thought and devotion. She is like the goddess in Milton's *Pensieroso*.

#### A SUMMER EVENING'S MEDITATION.

" 'Tis past ! the sultry tyrant of the south  
Has spent his short-liv'd rage : more grateful hours  
Move silent on : the skies no more repel  
The dazzled sight ; but, with mild maiden beams  
Of temper'd light, invite the cherish'd eye  
To wander o'er their sphere ; where hung aloft  
Dian's bright crescent, like a silver bow  
New strung in heaven, lifts high its beamy horns,  
Impatient for the night, and seems to push  
Her brother down the sky. Fair Venus shines,  
Even in the eye of day ; with sweetest beam  
Propitious shines, and shakes a trembling flood  
Of soften'd radiance from her dewy locks.  
The shadows spread apace, while meek'n'd Eve,



Her cheek yet warm with blushes, slow retires  
 Thro' the Hesperian gardens of the west,  
 And shuts the gates of day. 'Tis now the hour  
 When Contemplation, from her sunless haunts,  
 The cool damp grotto, or the lonely depth  
 Of unpierc'd woods, where wrapt in solid shade  
 She mus'd away the gaudy hours of noon,  
 And, fed on thoughts unripen'd by the sun,  
 Moves forward ; and with radiant finger points  
 To yon blue concave swell'd by breath divine,  
 Where, one by one, the living eyes of heaven  
 Awake, quick kindling o'er the face of ether  
 One boundless blaze ; ten thousand trembling fires,  
 And dancing lustres, where th' unsteady eye,  
 Restless and dazzled, wanders unconfin'd  
 O'er all this field of glories : spacious field,  
 And worthy of the master : he whose hand,  
 With hieroglyphics elder than the Nile,  
 Inscrib'd the mystic tablet ; hung on high  
 To public gaze ; and said, Adore, O man,  
 The finger of thy God ! From what pure wells  
 Of milky light, what soft o'erflowing urn,  
 Are all these lamps so fill'd ? these friendly lamps  
 For ever streaming o'er the azure deep  
 To point our path, and light us to our home.  
 How soft they slide along their lucid spheres !  
 And, silent as the foot of time, fulfil  
 Their destin'd courses : Nature's self is hush'd,  
 And, but a scatter'd leaf, which rustles thro'  
 The thick-wove foliage, not a sound is heard  
 To break the midnight air ; tho' the rais'd ear  
 Intensely listening, drinks in every breath.  
 How deep the silence, yet how loud the praise !  
 But are they silent all ? or is there not  
 A tongue in every star that talks with man,  
 And woos him to be wise ? nor woos in vain :  
 This dead of midnight is the noon of thought,  
 And wisdom mounts her zenith with the stars.  
 At this still hour the self-collected soul  
 Turns inward, and beholds a stranger there  
 Of high descent, and more than mortal rank ;  
 An embryo God ; a spark of fire divine,  
 Which must burn on for ages, when the sun  
 (Fair transitory creature of a day)  
 Has clos'd his golden eye, and, wrapt in shades,  
 Forgets his wonted journey thro' the east.

" Ye citadels of light, and seats of Gods !  
 Perhaps my future home, from whence the soul,  
 Revolving periods past, may oft look back,  
 With recollected tenderness, on all  
 The various busy scenes she left below,  
 Its deep-laid projects and its strange events,  
 As on some fond and doting tale that sooth'd  
 Her infant hours—O be it lawful now

To tread the hallow'd circle of your courts,  
 And with mute wonder and delighted awe  
 Approach your burning confines!—Seiz'd in thought,  
 On fancy's wild and roving wing I sail  
 From the green borders of the peopled earth,  
 And the pale moon, her duteous fair attendant;  
 From solitary Mars; from the vast orb  
 Of Jupiter, whose huge gigantic bulk  
 Dances in ether like the lightest leaf;  
 To the dim verge, the suburbs of the system,  
 Where cheerless Saturn, midst his watery moons,  
 Girt with a lucid zone, in gloomy pomp,  
 Sits like an exil'd monarch: fearless thence  
 I launch into the trackless deeps of space,  
 Where, burning round, ten thousand suns appear,  
 Of elder beam; which ask no leave to shine  
 Of our terrestrial star, nor borrow light  
 From the proud regent of our scanty day;  
 Sons of the morning, first-born of creation,  
 And only less than Him who marks their track,  
 And guides their fiery wheels. Here must I stop,  
 Or is there aught beyond? What hand unseen  
 Impels me onward thro' the glowing orbs  
 Of habitable nature, far remote,  
 To the dread confines of eternal night,  
 To solitudes of vast unpeopled space,  
 The deserts of creation wide and wild,  
 Where embryo systems and unkindled suns  
 Sleep in the womb of chaos? fancy droops,  
 And thought astonish'd stops her bold career.  
 But, O thou mighty Mind! whose powerful word  
 Said, Thus let all things be, and thus they were,  
 Where shall I seek thy presence? how unblam'd  
 Invoke thy dread perfection?—  
 Have the broad eyelids of the morn beheld thee?  
 Or does the beamy shoulder of Orion  
 Support thy throne? O look with pity down  
 Or erring, guilty man! not in thy names  
 Of terror clad; not with those thunders arm'd  
 That conscious Sinai felt, when fear appall'd  
 The scatter'd tribes! Thou hast a gentler voice,  
 That whispers comfort to the swelling heart,  
 Abash'd, yet longing to behold her Maker.

“ But now, my soul, unus'd to stretch her powers  
 In flight so daring, drops her weary wing,  
 And seeks again the known accustom'd spot,  
 Drest up with sun, and shade, and lawns, and streams;  
 A mansion fair and spacious for its guest,  
 And full replete with wonders. Let me here,  
 Content and grateful, wait the appointed time,  
 And ripen for the skies; the hour will come  
 When all these splendours bursting on my sight  
 Shall stand unveil'd, and to my ravish'd sense  
 Unlock the glories of the world unknown.”



So be it.—It is difficult to finish the perusal of a poem like this, without an aspiration in harmony with it. All that can be hoped for, consistent with the joy and the dignity of such contemplations, ought to be so; and with minds that have all their faculties, will be so: but the present state of existence need not, for all that, be “a fond and doting tale.” It is from this world that we see the other;—our planet, (to reason from analogy) helps to furnish other planets with similar hopes; and why should we not think that we have a piece of heaven in our keeping, to bring into its proper state, granting that there are other and better heavens to go to, as from a less garden into a greater?—The reader will excuse the introduction of these speculations into places that may not always seem fitted for them. There are thoughts which it is useful to keep alive, whenever opportunity occurs; and it is high time for the imaginative part of philosophy to speak out, and vindicate that tendency to natural piety, which is not inconsistent with the utmost liberality of speculation, and a refusal to beg questions of any sort.

Mrs Barbauld, like other persons of genuine fancy, had great good sense. Mr Hazlitt has mentioned somewhere her Essay on the Inconsistency of our Expectations. If ever she committed a mistake, she was one, we conceive, who would retrieve it, or bear the consequences, in the best manner. We believe that it is generally understood she did make one, when she married Mr Barbauld,—a “little Presbyterian parson,” as Johnson indignantly called him. Not that he was not a good man, but very much her inferior; a dwarf altogether, to one of her liberal dimensions. “Such tricks hath strong imagination,” even when united with the strongest understanding. The latter indeed sometimes only favours the trick, by using its levelling faculty with regard to the many, in vindication of the favoured object; and by a promise of being sufficient to itself, in case of the worst. But youth generally settles these matters, before the understanding is ripened; and knowledge and repentance are forced by society to grow on the same bough. To judge by her writings (and by what better things can we judge, if they have the right look of sincerity?) Mrs Barbauld ought to have had a Raleigh or Sidney for her lover. She had both intel-

lect and passion enough to match a spirit heroical. The song beginning

“Come here, fond youth, whoe’er thou be,”

has all the devoted energy of the old poets.

O Lady Anne Barnard, thou that didst write the ballad of Auld Robin Gray, which must have suffused more eyes with tears of the first water than any other ballad that ever was written, we hail, and pay thee homage, knowing thee now for the first time by thy real name! But why wast thou a woman of quality, when thou oughtst to have been (as thou wast at heart) nothing but the truest lady of thy time? and what close Scotch example was it, that joining with the sophistications of thy rank, didst make thee so anxious to keep thy secret from the world, and ashamed to be spoken of as an authoress? Shall habit and education be so strong with those who ought to form instead of being formed by them, as to render such understandings as thine insensible to the humiliation of the fancied dignity of concealment, and the poor pride of being ashamed to give pleasure? But alas! such vanities are practised by still greater wits than thine; and the more, for the world’s sake as well as their own, the pity.

The following is the interesting account given by Lady Anne of the birth and fortunes of her ballad: for interesting it is, and we felt delighted to meet with it; though our delight was damped by the considerations just mentioned. We used to feel as if we could walk barefoot to Scotland to see the author of the finest ballad in the world. We now began to doubt; not because we feared the fate of the person who endeavoured to “entrap the truth” from her (though the reception he met with, we think, was hard, considering that an author, at once popular and anonymous, is not likely to have escaped with too nice a conscience in matters of veracity) but because we lose our inclination to see uncommon people who condescend to wear common masks. We preface her Ladyship’s account with Mr Dyce’s introduction.

“Lady Anne Barnard, (born . . . . ., died 1825) sister of the late Earl of Balcarras, and wife of Sir Andrew Barnard, wrote the charming song of Auld Robin Gray. A quarto tract, edited by “the Ariosto of the

North," and circulated among the members of the Bannatyne Club, contains the original ballad, as corrected by Lady Anne, and two continuations by the same authoress; while the Introduction consists almost entirely of a very interesting letter from her to the Editor, dated July 1823, part of which I take the liberty of inserting here:—

"‘Robin Gray,’ so called from its being the name of the old herd at Balcarras, was born soon after the close of the year 1771. My sister Margaret had married, and accompanied her husband to London; I was melancholy, and endeavoured to amuse myself by attempting a few poetical trifles. There was an ancient Scotch melody, of which I was passionately fond; — — —, who lived before your day, used to sing it to us at Balcarras. She did not object to its having improper words, though I did. I longed to sing old Sophy’s air to different words, and give to its plaintive tones some little history of virtuous distress in humble life, such as might suit it. While attempting to effect this in my closet, I called to my little sister, now Lady Hardwicke, who was the only person near me, ‘I have been writing a ballad, my dear; I am oppressing my heroine with many misfortunes. I have already sent her Jamie to sea—and broken her father’s arm—and made her mother fall sick—and given her Auld Robin Gray for her lover; but I wish to load her with a fifth sorrow within the four lines, poor thing! Help me to one.’—‘Steal the cow, sister Anne,’ said the little Elizabeth. The cow was immediately *lifted* by me, and the song completed. At our fireside, and amongst our neighbours, ‘Auld Robin Gray’ was always called for. I was pleased in secret with the approbation it met with; but such was *my dread* of being suspected of writing *anything*, perceiving the shyness it created in those who could write *nothing*, that I carefully kept my own secret.” \* \* \*

"Meantime, little as this matter seems to have been worthy of a dispute, it afterwards became a party question between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. ‘Robin Gray’ was either a very ancient ballad, composed perhaps by David Rizzio, and a great curiosity, or a very very modern matter, and no curiosity at all. I was persecuted to avow whether I had written it or not,—where I had got it. Old Sophy kept my counsel, and I kept my own, in spite of the gratification of seeing a reward of twenty guineas offered in the newspapers to the person who should ascertain the point past a doubt, and the still more flattering circumstance of a visit from Mr Jerningham, secretary to the Antiquarian Society, who endeavoured to entrap the truth from me in a manner I took amiss. Had he asked me the question obligingly, I should have told him the fact distinctly and confidentially. The annoyance, however, of this important ambassador from the Antiquaries, was amply repaid to me by the noble exhibition of the ‘Ballad of Auld Robin Gray’s Courtship,’ as performed by dancing-dogs under my window. It proved its popularity from the highest to the lowest, and gave me pleasure while I hugged myself in my obscurity."

"The two versions of the second part were written many years after the first; in them, Auld Robin Gray falls sick,—confesses that he himself stole the cow, in order to force Jenny to marry him,—leaves to Jamie all his possessions,—dies,—and the young couple, of course, are united. Neither of the Continuatiens is given here, because, though both are beautiful, they are very inferior to the original tale, and greatly injure its effect."



## AULD ROBIN GRAY.

"When the sheep are in the fauld, when the cows come hame,  
When a' the weary world to quiet rest are gane,  
The woes of my heart fa' in showers frae my ee,  
Unken'd by my gudeman, who soundly sleeps by me.

"Young Jamie loo'd me weel, and sought me for his bride;  
But saving ae crown-piece, he'd naething else beside.  
To make the crown a pound,\* my Jamie gaed to sea;  
And the crown and the pound, O they were baith for me!

"Before he had been gane a twelvemonth and a day,  
My father brak his arm, our cow was stown away;  
My mother she fell sick—my Jamie was at sea—  
And Auld Robin Gray, oh! he came a-courting me.

"My father cou'dna work—my mother cou'dna spin;  
I toil'd day and night, but their bread I cou'dna win;  
Auld Rob maintain'd them baith, and, wi' tears in his ee,  
Said, 'Jenny, oh! for their sakes, will you marry me?'

"My heart it said na, and I look'd for Jamie back;  
But hard blew the winds, and his ship was a wrack:  
His ship it was a wrack! Why didna Jamie dee?  
Or, wherefore am I spar'd to cry out, Woe is me!

"My father argued sair—my mother didna speak,  
But she look'd in my face till my heart was like to break;  
They gied him my hand, but my heart was in the sea;  
And so Auld Robin Gray, he was gudeman to me.

"I hadna been his wife, a week but only four,  
When mournfu' as I sat on the stane at my door,  
I saw my Jamie's ghaist—I cou'dna think it he,  
Till he said, "I'm come hame, my love, to marry thee!"

"O sair, sair did we greet, and mickle say of a';  
Ae kiss we took, nae mair—I bad him gang awa.  
I wish that I were dead, but I'm no like to dee;  
For O, I am but young to cry out, Woe is me!

"I gang like a ghaist, and I carena much to spin;  
I darena think o' Jamie, for that wad be a sin.  
But I will do my best a gude wife aye to be,  
For Auld Robin Gray, oh! he is sae kind to me."

Such is the most pathetic ballad that ever was written; and such are the marriages, which it is accounted a sin, not to suffer,

\* "I must also mention" (says Lady Anne, in the letter already quoted) "the Laird of Dalziel's advice, who, in a *tête-à-tête*, afterwards said, 'My dear, the next time you sing that song, try to change the words a wee bit, and instead of singing "To make the crown a pound, my Jamie gaed to sea," say, to make it twenty merks, for a Scottish pund is but twenty pence, and Jamie was na such a gowk as to leave Jenny and gang to sea to lessen his gear. It is that line (whisper'd he) that tells me that sang was written by some bonnie lassie that didna ken the value of the Scots money quite so well as an auld writer in the town of Edinburgh would have kent it.'"

but to throw off! The old man too, in this perplexity of perniciousness, is good and generous in everything but his dotage; and the parents not only take themselves for kind ones, but are so, with the exception of their will to sacrifice their child; and ignorance and example excuse that! Finally, the poor slaves who suffer from such abuses, and the cleverer, but in some respects not better taught ones, who think them to be tolerated, out of some fear of ill, or envy of alteration, agree to go on calling this world a "vale of tears," they themselves taking care all the while to keep up a proper quantity of the supply! To pierce into such old masses of absurdity is surely to prepare their general breaking up.

Miss Hannah More, a lady not out of harmony with these discords which the world have been so long taking for their melancholy music, is the one that comes next. It is the first time we ever read any of her verses; and she has fairly surprised us, not only with some capital good sense, but with liberal and feeling sentiments! How could a heart, capable of uttering such things, get encrusted with Calvinism! and that too, not out of fear and bad health, but in full possession, as it should seem, both of cheerfulness and sensibility! Oh strange effects of example and bringing up! when humanity itself can be made to believe in the divineness of what is inhuman! "Sweet Sensibility!" cries our fair advocate of eternal punishment—

"Sweet Sensibility! thou keen delight!  
Unprompted moral! sudden sense of right!  
Perception exquisite! fair virtue's seed!  
Thou quick precursor of the liberal deed!  
Thou hasty conscience! reason's blushing morn!  
Instinctive kindness ere reflection's born!  
Prompt sense of equity! to thee belongs  
The swift redress of unexamined wrongs!  
Eager to serve, the cause perhaps untried,  
But always apt to choose the suffering side!  
To those who know thee not, no words can paint,  
And those who know thee, know all words are faint."

And again:—

"Since life's best joys consist in peace and ease,  
And tho' but few can serve, yet all may please;  
O let th' ungentle spirit learn from hence,  
A small unkindness is a great offence."

The whole poem, with the exception of some objections to preachers of benevolence like Sterne (who must be taken, like the

fall of the dew, in their general effect upon the mass of the world) is full of good sense and feeling; though what the fair theologian guards us against in our estimation of complexional good nature, is to be carried a great deal farther than she supposes. "As Feeling," she says,

"——— tends to good, or leans to ill,  
It gives fresh force to vice or principle;  
'Tis but a gift peculiar to the good,  
'Tis often but the virtue of the blood;  
And what would seem Compassion's moral flow,  
Is but a circulation swift or slow."

True; and what would seem religion's happy flow, is often nothing better. But this argues nothing against religion or compassion. Whatever tends to secure the happiest flow of the blood, provides best for the ends of virtue, if happiness be virtue's object. A man, it is true, may *begin* with being happy, on the mere strength of the purity and vivacity of his pulse: children do so; but he must have derived his constitution from very virtuous, temperate, and happy parents indeed, and be a great fool to boot, and wanting in the commonest sympathies of his nature, if he can continue happy, and yet be a bad man; and then he could not be bad, in the worst sense of the word, for his deficiencies would excuse him. It is time for philosophy and true religion to know one another, and not hesitate to follow the most impartial truths into their consequences. If "a small unkindness is a great offence," what can Miss Hannah More say to the infliction of eternal punishment? Or are God and his ways eternally to be represented as something so different from the best attributes of humanity, that the wonder must be, how humanity can survive in spite of the mistake? The truth is, that the circulation of Miss More's own blood is a better thing than all her doctrines put together; and, luckily, it is a much more universal inheritance. The heart of man is constantly sweeping away the errors he gets into his brain.

There is a good deal of sense and wit in the extract from *Florio: a Tale for Fine Gentlemen and Fine Ladies*; but Miss More is for attributing the vices of disingenuousness, sneering, and sensuality, to freethinkers exclusively; which is disingenuous on her own part; as if these vices were not shared by the inconsistent of all classes. She herself sneers in the very act of denouncing sneerers;



nor did we ever know that a joke was spared by the orthodox, when they could get one. As to sensuality, we all know how many contrivances they put in practice, by the help of their butchers and wine-merchants, to enjoy it without scandal. The circulation of the blood does not stand still with them.

“Whate’er the subject of debate,  
 ’Twas larded still with sceptic prate;  
 Begin whatever theme you will,  
 In unbelief he lands you still.  
 The good, with shame I speak it, feel  
 Not half this proselyting zeal;  
 While cold their Master’s cause to own,  
 Content to go to Heaven alone;  
 The infidel in liberal trim,  
 Would carry all the world with him;  
 Would treat his wife, friend, kindred, nation,  
 Mankind—with what?—Annihilation.”

Well said, but not true. It does not follow that a man must believe in annihilation, because he disbelieves in hell-fire; though if he did, the disbelief is a great deal better, and more creditable to God, than the belief. But the confession about “*the good*” who are “content to go to heaven alone,” is edifying. Miss More, at all events, is not one of them; but she need not be alarmed, nor reproach herself (as we think she sometimes must do) for having attained such a healthy and happy old age, and thinking so comfortably of going to heaven, while millions of her fellow creatures are going a different road. Wherever she finds herself, there will be a world of company; and an infidel will not be the less there, because he does not think he shall. What! Shall a child not be taken to see his father, and to receive kindness at his hands, purely because never having seen him, he has got a notion that he does not exist?

We must now bring our extracts to a conclusion. There are some agreeable specimens of Miss Baillie; an admirable ballad on *the Wind*, attributed to Mr Wordsworth’s sister; and some pieces by Miss Landon and Mrs Hemans, two popular writers, who would bring their pearls to greater perfection if they would concentrate their faculties a little, and be content not to manufacture so many of them. The passages from Miss Landon, we should guess, are not so favourably extracted as those from Mrs Hemans, who has

some noble verses on the Sea. The former of these ladies (to judge from their effusions, for we have not the pleasure of knowing either of them) is too indolent to take pains; and affects a thousand grave thoughts, for which she cares less than the trouble of writing them. The latter is too grand and gorgeous on all occasions; brings every one of her fancies out into the same prominence; and seems to think simplicity itself worth nothing but to make a show with. She stirs her tea with a sceptre; and sits among her domesticities, crowned. Yet she has both feeling and dignity; and Miss Landon ought to have been a very charming writer on the side of the pleasurable, instead of falling upon shallow admirers who fancied they understood her, and who have a natural instinct for the encouragement of wordiness and common-place. Both these ladies should take dozens of their poems at a time, and melt them down into single ones each; taking care to avoid that tendency to dancing measures and the modern Troubadour tone, which is a great encourager of rhyme for rhyme's sake, and beguiles effort into idleness by the complacency of its music. We beg pardon for taking this liberty of advice, which we do as friends and real admirers; being too great advocates of their sex in general, not to be struck, as we ought, with whatever is likely to exalt it in the particular.

---

#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A number of the *Glasgow Free Press* has been handed us, containing an article which has touched us on the score of our efforts and real wishes, beyond anything of the kind. We reserve the more particular expression of our feelings about it, for an occasion when the notice can be of greater use.

---

#### LONDON:

Published by HUNT and CLARKE, York street, Covent garden; and sold by all Booksellers and Newsvenders in town and country.—Price 4d.

---

PRINTED BY C. H. REYNELL, BROAD STREET, GOLDEN SQUARE.